Ministry of Children and Family Development

2014/15 Annual Service Plan Report

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Minister's Message and Accountability Statement

It is my pleasure to present the Ministry of Children and Family Development's 2014/15 Annual Service Plan Report. The past year has been marked by many accomplishments as we continue towards achieving our vision of a province where children and youth are healthy, safe and supported to reach their full potential.

In November 2014, 32 child-care providers shared a total of $7 million to create 1,006 new licensed child-care spaces under the ministry's Child Care Major Capital Funding program. A second round of funding this spring will create an additional 1,000 spaces as part of our BC Early Years Strategy commitment to create a total of 13,000 new spaces by 2020.

BC Early Years Centres began opening in 26 communities throughout the province, bringing one-stop early learning, health and family services to families with young children. As a further step under the BC Early Years Strategy, the BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit now provides $146 million annually to roughly 180,000 families with children under the age of six.

In November, we launched a social media campaign, #1000familiesBC, to encourage British Columbians to adopt one of the more than 1,000 children and teens in care who are waiting for a forever family, and we provided $2 million to partner agencies and organizations to help increase the number of adoptions across the province.

In March, another social media campaign, #SaySomething, encouraged all British Columbians to speak up, work together and learn safe ways to help end domestic violence. In April, we provided $1 million to partner groups to develop preventative, community-based programs for perpetrators of domestic violence, and followed that up with $480,000 to support the successful Be More Than a Bystander anti-violence awareness program for another three years.

Our successes would not be possible without the dedication and shared commitment of our partners and ministry staff across B.C. I am privileged to be a part of their team and their commitment to making a difference in the lives of B.C. children, youth and families, each and every day.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development 2014/15 Annual Service Plan Report compares the Ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the 2014/15 - 2016/17 Service Plan. I am accountable for those results as reported.

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The Honourable Stephanie Cadieux
Minister of Children and Family Development
June 18, 2015

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Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry works together with Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, Aboriginal service partners and approximately 5400 contracted community social service agencies and foster homes, cross government and social sector partners to deliver inclusive, culturally respectful, responsive and accessible services that support the well-being of children, youth and families. The primary focus is to support vulnerable children and their families using a client-centred approach to service delivery that builds on the family's existing resources and capacities. Services are delivered in a respectful, compassionate, strengths-based and culturally appropriate manner to achieve meaningful outcomes. For information on specific programs and services, visit the Ministry of Children and Family Development internet site.

Strategic Direction and Context

Strategic Direction

Over the past few years, the ministry's focus on strategic priorities and key actions aimed at improving services to children, youth and families have provided a strong foundation, a well-defined structure and a clearer sense of direction. MCFD continues to support government priorities – such as the Early Years Strategy and Erase Bullying – while implementing strategic and manageable changes to support practice and make a difference for children, youth and families within a challenging context of fiscal realities and changing demographics.

The Minister's Mandate Letter (see attached Appendix B) speaks to Government's priorities – including a balanced budget, the Early Years Strategy, accessible and effective services for children, youth and families, and regular meetings with the Representative for Children and Youth – and a commitment to continuously improve our social programs to ensure that children and families have the opportunities they need to be successful. MLA Jane Thornthwaite is supporting the Minister as Parliamentary Secretary for Child Mental Health and Anti-Bullying.

Government's commitment to an accountable and cost consciousness culture, as outlined in the Taxpayer Accountability Principles, is reflected throughout this three year plan, which focuses on working together to explore new, more efficient and effective ways of providing programs and services that better meet the needs of children, youth and families that we serve.

Strategic Context

British Columbia's real GDP increased by 2.6 per cent in 2014 (according to preliminary GDP by industry data from Statistics Canada), following growth of 1.9 per cent in 2013. Strong retail sales growth was partly driven by increased tourism and interprovincial migration, while continued low interest rates supported housing starts growth. Despite unbalanced external demand, BC exports and manufacturing shipments posted notable gains. Meanwhile, employment in BC increased modestly. Several risks to British Columbia's economy remain, including the potential for a slowdown in domestic and US activity, ongoing fragility in Europe, and slower than anticipated Asian demand, particularly in China. Additional risks include a fluctuating Canadian dollar and weak inflation, in part due to lower oil prices.

The Government of BC remains committed to controlled spending and the implementation of initiatives to support a leaner and more efficient organization. The ministry is supporting Government's overall fiscal discipline through effective budget management, undertaking process improvement activities as part of the cross-government Lean initiative and clarifying and prioritizing its strategic work. This efficient use of our limited resources ensures services are being provided as effectively as possible to those British Columbians who need them the most.

Report on Performance

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

Ministry goals, objectives and strategies are aligned with government's priorities of a strong economy and a secure tomorrow and initiatives addressed in the Minister's Mandate Letter (Appendix B). They also demonstrate government's commitment to controlled spending and balancing the budget through the implementation of Taxpayer Accountability Principles.

With the implementation of the Integrated Case Management system (ICM), the ministry found that previous years' reporting was not as up to date as it could have been. New functionality in ICM identified a duplication in a few data areas which is being corrected. The impact of this on performance measures is negligible and doesn't affect performance targets.

Goal 1: Improved outcomes for children, youth and families through accessible, safe and appropriate services.

Objective 1.1: Early Years – Affordable, quality early years services are available to children and families who need them.

In response to key findings from public engagement on Early Childhood Development and Child Care services, the ministry is taking a more flexible and responsive approach to the changing needs of families through the provision of quality, affordable services and access to programs and services for children who need them. With the creation of a Provincial Office for the Early Years, the ministry will lead the implementation of the BC Early Years Strategy and create service delivery approaches that will better support families with young children.

Strategies

- Implement a cross-ministry approach to better coordinate early years services, programs and decision making and move forward with the Early Years Strategy and its initiatives to improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of early childhood development, early learning and child care programs and services.
- Implement a provincially branded network of Early Years Centres across Service Delivery Areas to improve and coordinate the delivery of Early Years Services.

Objective 1.2: Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) – Children and youth with special needs will have access to a range of supports, benefits and funding.

The ministry works in partnership with social sector partner ministries, Health, Education and Social Development and Social Innovation, as well as regional and community agencies to deliver accessible, high-quality intervention and support services to children and youth with special needs who require significant additional educational, medical/health and social/environmental supports to promote their healthy development, maximize their quality of life, assist their families as primary caregivers and support their full participation in community life.

Strategies

- To support young children with type 1 diabetes in school settings, collaborate with the Ministries of Health and Education to develop and implement provincial standards, training material and policies to support the delegation of insulin administration. Delegation of insulin administration by Nursing Support Services Coordinators will begin in September 2014.
- Based on the results of the therapy mapping project and stakeholders' consultations, identify opportunities for increased integration of programs across the pediatric therapy service delivery system including options for organizing and administering School-aged Therapy (SAT) services
- Achieve short and long-term operational and policy improvements in the Medical Benefits Program, based on the suggestions of the external Medical Benefits Working Group, comprised of representatives of the contracted therapy agencies professional groups involved in submitting medical benefits requests and professional colleges involved in regulating relevant medical professions.

Objective 1.3: Child and Youth Mental Health Services (CYMH) – Mental health services for children and youth will be accessible and effective.

The ministry delivers mental health services to children and youth under 19 years of age through community-based Child and Youth Mental Health teams, the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre and Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services as well as community-based substance-use intervention services for youth involved with the justice system.

Strengthening child and youth mental health services is one of the ministry's strategic initiatives, involving significant changes that are being developed and implemented in collaboration with families, Aboriginal communities, staff, service delivery partners and other key stakeholders to ensure better-coordinated quality services. The focus over the next few years will be on improving access to services, managing wait-lists, providing additional supports to families who are navigating the system and improving transitions between community and youth and adult services.

Strategies

- Improve the steps that families take initially to access CYMH services.

- Increase consistency of practice by confirming treatment services provided by community CYMH teams across the province.
- Implement transition protocols between youth and adult mental health services at the community level, and between hospital and community-based mental health services.

Performance Measure 1: Tele-mental health sessions

Performance Measure	2011/12 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Total number of tele-mental health sessions	24	120	157	135	355	300	325

Data Source: BC Children's Hospital

Tele-mental health sessions increase access to psychiatric consultation closer to home for children and youth living in rural and remote areas through direct clinical tele-health consultations with psychiatrists located at BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver. This measure is an indicator of the success of tele-health as a means of enhancing access to service in those communities and represents 355 total appointments that, in the past, would have required significant travel on either the part of the family or on the part of the specialist.

Objective 1.4: Child Safety, Family Support and Children in Care Services – Children and youth will grow up in safe, stable environments that promote permanency and meet their emotional, cultural and developmental needs.

A number of families need extra support to provide safe and nurturing care for their children. Under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, child welfare workers assess every report about a child's need for protection and respond through the Child Protection Response Model with a variety of approaches, including a Family Development Response (FDR) or Child Protection Investigation Response.

Strategies

- Implement revised Child Protection Response Model policies and conduct training for MCFD and DAA staff affected by the changes.
- Strengthen DAA/MCFD Planning Committee processes and structures in Service Delivery Areas to support full collaboration and accountability to provide seamless services for Aboriginal children, youth and families receiving services under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*.
- Complete training for all MCFD and DAA social work staff on the renewed Care Plan template to be used in planning for children in care.
- Provide resources and support for working with children and youth with complex care needs.

- Acting on the recommendations of the Residential Review Project, a joint review of residential care services provided by the ministry:
    - Develop community residential care and treatment resource plans,
    - Initiate Caregiver Support Networks, and
    - Initiate implementation of a recruitment and retention strategy for foster caregivers.
- Review post majority services and supports in collaboration with other sector partners and the private sector to better support young adults up to age 24 who are transitioning from care or youth agreements.
- MCFD will continue to work collaboratively across government to identify opportunities to engage with communities to address issues rooted in poverty, inclusive of community strategies.

Performance Measure 2: Ratio of FDR to Investigation

Performance Measure	2011/12 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Ratio of Family Development Responses to Investigations	0.46	2.2	3.0	4.8	4.0	5.0	5.5

Data Source: ICM

Family Development Response (FDR) is the preferred response over investigation, as it focuses on keeping a child safe while living in the family home and works to address safety issues by building on the family's strengths and support system. This performance measure compares the use of FDR to the use of investigations. The ratio rises as the use of FDR increases and the use of investigations decreases. For example, a ratio of 5.0 means that five times more FDRs were completed than investigations. In 2014/15 this ratio increased to 4, below the target of 4.8. Because investigation is still needed for some families, the increase in the ratio will slow over time, and this has started to occur in 2014/15, earlier than anticipated.

Performance Measure 3: Aboriginal children cared for in Aboriginal communities

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Of the Aboriginal children having to leave their parental home, the percent that receive services delivered by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, Aboriginal foster care providers or Aboriginal friends and family	53.2%	61.2%	63.4%	63.5%	59.4%	64.0%	64.5%

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System, ICM and Resource and Payment System

Aboriginal children are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system. Ensuring that Aboriginal children who have to leave their parental home receive services through an Aboriginal service system will strongly connect them to their culture and traditions. This measure is the proportion of those children who are being serviced by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, or are receiving ministry services delivered by Aboriginal foster care providers or Aboriginal friends and family. The ministry did not meet its target this year because more children and youth in care were identified as Aboriginal from November 2014 as a result of improved data quality from the implementation of phase four of the Integrated Case Management System.

Performance Measure 4: Placement Stability for children in care

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of children in "out of home care" for at least two years who experienced no change in placement	54.1%	62.1%	62.2%	63.1%	61.2%	62.6%	63.1%

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System, ICM and Resource and Payment System

Placement stability is essential for children and youth in care (CYIC) to develop secure attachment to a caregiver – a fundamental determinant of their well-being – and a sense of belonging. Some placement changes are necessary and can be beneficial in terms of ensuring the right fit for the child or youth, but generally avoiding or minimizing moves while in care is an important goal. Evidence shows that CYIC are more stable in placements where foster parents are well-training and supported. A CYIC that has to move is likely to do so in their first year of care preventing moves early in care is key. In this measure, "out of home care" includes children living with foster parents or with relatives for protection reasons.

This measure is the proportion of these children who remain in the same placement for at least two years. The ministry did not meet its target this year, remaining over five percentage points higher than the baseline.

The breakout table below provides more in-depth information about number of moves over one and two year periods.

	Did not Move 2014/15	Moved Once 2014/15	Moved 2 or more times 2014/15
Percent of children in "out of home care" for at least two years by number of changes in placement	61.2%	21.0%	17.7%
Percent of children and youth in care during the first year of care by number of changes in placement	69.4%	22.4%	8.2%

Performance Measure 5: Children whose grade is appropriate for their age

Performance Measure	2010/11 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of children in care under continuing custody orders whose grade level is appropriate for their age	78.8%	82.2%	83.5%	83.1%	83.9%	83.5%	83.9%

Data Source: Management Information System/Social Worker System, ICM and Ministry of Education enrolment data

Educational attainment is an excellent barometer of the overall well-being of children. Additional physical and development challenges and experiences of trauma that vulnerable children and youth face result in their being less likely in their adolescence to progress in school. The proportion of children and youth in care whose grade level is appropriate for their age is a good measure of whether the system of support for children in care ameliorates the impact of these additional vulnerabilities.

This measure is the percent of children in care under continuing custody who are at most five years older than their grade. For example, a child six years of age before the end of December is typically in grade one. The ministry met its target this year.

Objective 1.5: Adoption Services – Facilitate timely adoption placements for children and youth in permanent care.

Children and youth require a stable and continuous relationship with a nurturing person to maximize physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. If this relationship is not possible with the birth family or other extended family members, then permanency while in care is the next step. Adoption is one of the available permanency planning options.

Strategies

- Engage guardianship social workers and adoption social workers to ensure high compliance in care plans and transition to adoption planning for children in care.

Performance Measure 6: Children and youth placed for adoption

Performance Measure	2011/12 Baseline	2012/13 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percent of children and youth with adoption plans who have been placed	14.7%	15.0%	16.2%	17.0%	18.6%	22.5%	23.3%

Data Source: Adoption Management System

This measure shows the number of children who are placed for adoption within the fiscal year as a percentage of all the children in care who have a plan for adoption. While a plan for adoption is developed once it is decided that adoption is the best long term plan for a child in care, placement occurs when a child first moves in with prospective adoptive parents. An adoption order is only granted once all legal issues are addressed and a successful six month placement has occurred. The ministry achieved its target for adoptions for 2014/15.

Objective 1.6: Youth Justice Services – Youth who are in conflict with the law or who have significant psychiatric and behavioural difficulties will be supported through an integrated, multi-disciplinary trauma informed approach.

Youth Justice Services is comprised of Youth Custody Services and Community Youth Justice Services. These services assist youth to learn constructive skills, behaviours and attitudes that support healthy developmental outcomes and increased resiliency. Youth can also access services from Youth Forensic Psychiatric Services and Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre, which are part of the provincial Child and Youth Mental Health service network that provides an array of direct residential and community services for youth and their families. Other community based interventions include: restorative justice measures, intensive support and supervision programs, forensic psychiatric assessment and treatment services, day attendance programs that address school/employment/social skills and contracted community residential treatment and rehabilitative placements.

Strategies

- Continue to implement trauma informed practices that are gender sensitive, culturally responsive, engage families and communities, and focus on teaching youth self-management skills.
- With justice system partners, explore ways to educate youth justice personnel on issues related to cyberbullying, particularly in cases where the behaviour is of a serious enough nature to warrant criminal charges.

Objective 1.7: Improve and strengthen government's response to domestic violence.

The Provincial Office of Domestic Violence is the permanent lead for the B.C. Government, focused on strengthening the services and supports available for children and families affected by domestic violence. The office is accountable for ensuring all provincial services, programs and policies related to domestic violence are effective and delivered in a coordinated way across government. It is also the responsibility of the office to monitor, evaluate and regularly report out on the effectiveness and progress of services, programs and initiatives aimed at addressing domestic violence.

Strategies

- Produce a final progress report for *Taking Action on Domestic Violence in British Columbia*.
- Coordinate the implementation of actions listed in year one of the three-year provincial plan *Provincial Domestic Violence Plan* to continually improve and strengthen the effectiveness of domestic violence services, programs and policies.

Goal 2: An engaged, skilled, well-informed and well-led workforce.

Objective 2.1: Strategic use of resources

The ministry is committed to improving outcomes for children, youth and families by implementing an effective performance management framework that will increase public reporting on ministry performance and support ongoing, meaningful examination of existing programs and services to facilitate measurable action on improvement. The performance management framework supports the ministry in measuring progress and moving forward with its strategic agenda.

As well, employee health and wellness is being integrated into the culture, operations and service strategy of the ministry through actions that address employee engagement and communication, health and wellness, recruitment and hiring, career development and training and work environment and tools.

Strategies

- Continue to implement and evaluate the clinical supervision training modules.
- Continue the cultural competency training program.
- Continue implementation of a healthy workplace strategy.
- Continue to develop and broaden the reporting of outcomes and operations in the Operational Performance and Strategic Management Report.

Goal 3: Achieve operational excellence.

Objective 3.1: Standardize and improve efficiency of procedures and processes

Operational efficiency depends on strong information, cost and contract management, and continuous improvement. The ministry's strategic projects focus strongly on consistency, accountability and improved stakeholder relationships. The implementation of continuous improvement approaches, including the use of Lean, support staff to standardize and improve the efficiency of procedures and processes, and support the consistent delivery of ministry programs and services throughout the province.

Strategies

- Surpass Public Service Agency requirements for ministry Lean projects and staff training.
- Strengthen procurement and contract management processes for DAAs, community social service agencies and foster care providers/caregivers.
- Complete the final phase of the Integrated Case Management project.

Financial Report

The ministry's financial performance during the year, its year end position, and its future prospects are influenced by:

- Changing demographics – the population of children and youth is projected to increase; the complexity of need is increasing; and the population is aging – all of which may impact caseloads, the ability to recruit foster parents and ministry staffing.
- Demand for service, which continues to increase in the areas of child welfare and children and youth with special needs including Autism.
- Improvements to front line service delivery methods and changes to policy and programs may require investments in technology (such as telephony) and facilities over time.

Financial Report Summary Table – 2014/2015

Core Business Areas	Estimated[1]	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance[2]
Operating Expenses ($000)					
Early Years Services	267,611		267,611	249,281	(18,330)
Services for Children & Youth with Special Needs	301,477		301,477	307,301	5,824
Child & Youth Mental Health Services	78,831		78,831	77,508	(1,323)
Child Safety, Family Support & Children In Care Services	499,554		499,554	511,922	12,368
Adoption Services	26,563		26,563	29,136	2,573
Youth Justice Services	46,200		46,200	45,168	(1,032)
Service Delivery Support	117,558		117,558	122,203	4,645
Executive & Support Services	18,625		18,625	13,358	(5,267)
Sub-Total	**1,356,419**	**0**	**1,356,419**	**1,355,877**	**(542)**
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual[3]				(2,225)	(2,225)
Total	**1,356,419**	**0**	**1,356,419**	**1,353,652**	**(2,767)**

Financial Report Summary Table – 2014/2015 (con't)

Core Business Areas	Estimated[1]	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance[2]
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) ($000)					
Executive & Support Services	1,040		1,040	985	(55)
Total	**1,040**	**0**	**1,040**	**985**	**(55)**
Other Financing Transactions ($000)[4]					
Executive & Support Services (Human Services Providers Financing Program)					
Receipts	31		31	31	0
Disbursements					
Net Cash Source (Requirements)	31		31	31	0
Total Receipts	**31**	**0**	**31**	**31**	**0**
Total Disbursements	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total Net Cash Source (Requirements)	**31**	**0**	**31**	**31**	**0**

[1] The amounts in the "Estimated" column correspond to the Estimates budget as presented to the Legislative Assembly on February 18, 2014.

[2] Variance represents "Actual" minus "Total Estimated."
If the "actual" is greater than the "Total Estimated," the "Variance" will be displayed as a positive number.

[3] The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of $2.225 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

[4] Human Services Providers financing program receipts represent the repayment of one outstanding loan by a community social services provider. The funding for capital purposes was provided for under the Human Resource Facility Act.

The 2014/15 Ministry budget is based on assumptions contained within the *2014/15 -2016/17 Service Plan.*

The Ministry Operations Vote ended the year with a net surplus of $0.542 million, or 0.04% of the budget, prior to the accounting entry for Adjustment of Prior Year's Accrual.

- The Early Years Services core business surplus variance of 6.85% to annual budget is due to lower than expected contracting, lower than expected costs for developing childcare spaces and lower than anticipated childcare subsidy expenditures.

- The Services for Children & Youth with Special Needs core business deficit variance of 1.93% to annual budget is primarily the result of higher demand for Autism Support Payments, and higher than expected costs for Special Needs children in care.

- The Child & Youth Mental Health Services core business surplus variance of 1.68% to annual budget is primarily due to lower than expected spending on mental health services

- The Child Safety, Family Support & Children in Care Services core business deficit variance of 2.48% to annual budget is primarily due to higher than expected costs for family supports and alternates to care and increased utilization in Legal Services.

- The Adoption Services core business deficit variance of 9.69% to annual budget is primarily the result of increased investments in securing permanence for children in care.

- The Youth Justice Services core business surplus of 2.23% to annual budget is primarily the result of savings from the closure of the Victoria Youth Custody Centre.

- The Service Delivery Support core business deficit variance of 3.95% to annual budget is primarily the result of increased training and system costs.

- The Executive & Support Services core business surplus variance of 28.28% to annual budget was due to lower than expected spending on corporate services and centrally held reserves.

Appendix A: Contact Information and Hyperlinks

Ministry Contact Information

General Ministry Enquiries:

Client Relations: **250 387-7027** (in Victoria), or toll-free: **1 877 387-7027**
or E-mail: MCF.CorrespondenceManagement@gov.bc.ca

Ministry Mailing Address:

PO Box 9770 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9S5

Hyperlinks to Additional Information

Contact Us

Ministry's Homepage

Residential Review Project - Final Report

Publicly Reported Performance Measures

Community Living British Columbia

Ombudsperson

Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia

Representative for Children and Youth

Appendix B – Minister's Mandate and Actions Summary

In the Premier's annual Mandate Letter to the Minister dated 10 June 2013, the Minister of Children and Family Development received direction on strategic priorities for the 2014/15 fiscal year. These priorities and the ministry's resulting actions are summarized below:

Mandate Letter Direction	Ministry's Action
1. Balance your ministerial budget in order to control spending and ensure an overall balanced budget for the province of British Columbia.	The ministry balanced its 2013/14 budget.
2. Implement the Early Years Strategy ensuring that families and children receive the supports they need to succeed.	**Early Years** – Created the Provincial Office for the Early Years by March 31, 2014.
3. Working with the Minister of Finance, ensure that the early childhood tax benefit registration is implemented to maximize parent participation in this important family support program.	**Childhood Tax Benefit** – The tax benefit did not start until April 1, 2015 however, to determine eligibility and benefit amount, families needed to file a tax return in 2013, to inform the benefit for the first quarter of the 2015/16 fiscal. As such, the focus was to communicate and inform families about the tax benefit and file their 2013 tax returns. To do so, the ministry collaborated with the Ministry of Finance to develop a communication strategy to inform families on how the Early Childhood Tax Benefit will be accessed and the need for families to file their 2013 tax returns. The communication strategy was developed by February 28, 2014 and implemented by March 31, 2014.
4. Continue to make measurable improvements in the provision of accessible and effective services for the children, youth, and families served by MCFD. Key to these improvements is a continued focus on services and outcomes for Aboriginal children, youth, and families.	**Youth-In-Care Transitions** – By March 31, 2014, designed and began the 12 week STRIVE program to support up to 40 Youth in Care or Youth on Agreements transitioning to independent living in the community
5. Complete the implementation of the Integrated Case Management computer system to provide front line child protection personnel the tool they need to keep kids safe.	**ICM** –Release 3.2 was successfully implemented on January 27, 2014, introducing changes to the ICM system to give parents of children with autism who receive direct funding more control over the purchase of the intervention services best suited to their child's needs. The final phase of ICM is on target for implementation in November 2014.

Mandate Letter Direction	Ministry's Action
6. Create a regular quarterly meeting between yourself and the Representative for Children and Youth to create a more open and transparent relationship with her office.	Minister attended regular meetings with the Representative for Children and Youth.
7. Ensure that the ministry identifies opportunities to support the province's Erase Bullying strategy.	**Domestic Violence** – Publicly released the Three Year Domestic Violence Plan on February 5, 2014 to improve and strengthen the effectiveness of Domestic Violence policies, programs and services in British Columbia.